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A
LETTER

FROM

Mr. COCKBURN.

TO

The Right Honourable

JOHN

EARL of

ROXBURGH,

One of the Principal SECRETARIES of
STATE for the Kingdom of

SCOTLAND.

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DOM. 1705.



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May it please your
LORDSHIP,

YOUR high Station and eminent Character acquir'd by Your early Merits and singular Virtues, does not only invite, but oblige me to address Your Lordship in the following Proposal; Which, if animated by Your Wise Approbation, will redound to Your Lordships Honour, and Countries Advantage.

Your

Your Lordships Advancement
 in Learning beyond the ordinary
 Reach, entitles You to be a Pro-
 mover of this Design: There-
 fore I hope that such a Master of
 Letters, and Well-wisher there-
 of, will please favour these few
 Lines with Your Lordships kind
 Protection.

My

My LORD,

THE right Institution of Subjects in their tender Years, has been looked upon by all wise Men as the Foundation of the lasting Happiness of Soverains, and the flourishing Condition of Their Dominions. Literature does improve the Mind, and Fashion our Manners, whereby we are the better enabled to exerce our several Functions and Employs in a decent, regular and dutiful Way. The Promotion then of Learning is an Ornament profitable to the Nation. Yet methinks the Commonwealth of Letters has not been regarded in a Proportion due to its real Worth. The Method of Teaching in the Universities being confin'd to certain obsolete Rules, does not relish the Taste of this refin'd Age, wherein Learning has chang'd its Scene. At present the Belle's Letters are more in Request than the nice Subtilities and Cobweb

web disputes of Philosophy. Upon this account most of our Gentry apprehending the Accademick Learning cloged with a great deal of insignificant Trash and Rubbish, seldom notice more than the Languages. And after some small Progress therein, they immediately go Abroad into Forreign Universities, where they are overloaded with too many Studies at once. Thus they are necessarily overcharg'd, in respect that they have not acquir'd a sufficient Stock of Knowledge, in order to a more facile Attainment of that particular Science they intend to be Masters of. This is also the unhappy Occasion of their staying too long from Home, to the Nations and their own vast Charge. Whereas, had They been better instructed before their Departure hence, They might not only finish in a shorter Time their Studies; But would also have the Leisure and Opportunity of informing themselves in the Manners of the People, and the Political Government of several States, which ought to be the chief Design of Travelers.

In order to remedy in a great measure these Inconveniencies, I intend (after due Encouragement) to institute a Colledge or
Lecture

Lecture of *Moral* and *Political Learning*.

In which Lecture the Laws of Nature and Nations shall be fully explained and treated. History also shall also sometimes be intermix'd. The Students will here be taught Ethicks or Moral Philosophy, and Logick in a concise and perspicuous Way, obvious to very mean Capacities. For, I shall cause them Dispute, Speak, and Write, in an Easie and Familiar Style.

This Comprehensive Science (if diligently attended) will contribute much to lay a solid Foundation for the studying Law or Divinity. It will likewise endue Gentlemen with many conspicuous Qualifications suitable to their Characters. The pleasant and easie Method that shall be observed in informing the Youth, without harsh or scholastick Terms, will induce Them greedily to pursue this Knowledge. To descant particularly upon this Design, would be tedious; Therefore I will confine my self to a short Hint thereof, that its Usefulness may be set in a true Light:

The Laws of Nature and Nations, are the Source from which all Municipal Laws derive their Origine. It is unto these Prime Laws that Potentates and States refer the Decision of their Controversies.

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The greatest part of the *Roman Law*, which for its Excellency and Politness is term'd *The Civil*, is compil'd from these Primary Laws, and it differs not much from them, except in the Matter of Form. The *Law of Nature* is useful for the Interpretation of the Civil, as well as its Reformation; when the latter is defective, Judges and Lawyers have Recourse to the former, which is the Standard by which all Laws are measured. For the Great and Noble End of this Law of Nature, is to cultivate and promote the common Interest of Rational Beings. My intended Lecture then will lay a firm Basis capable to sustain so Noble and Weighty a Superstructure, as that of the Civil Law; And without this deep Foundation, the heavy Fabrick will never be serviceable, but prove Unwieldy.

The *Divine Laws* have some Resemblance and nigh Affinity to the *Laws of Nature*, of which GOD is the Author. When in this Study a Comparasion is stated betwixt the Divine and Natural Laws, and between Revealed, and Natural Religion; Then the Goodness and Suitableness of GOD's Laws, as well as the Excellency of the Christian Religion may be clearly

clearly discerned and demonstrated. So that this Proposal will be a Good Introduction to Theologie. For it will discover to us what a Reformation of our Lives and Manners is requisite, even conform to the Dictates of Natural Reason. It will evidence to us our Natural Duties to GOD, our Selves and Neighbours, whereby we shall be convinced how much we are indebted to the clearer Light of the Gospel.

By this proposed Study, our Mind, the better Part of us, will be refined from its gross Errors and Prejudices, our Reason will be liberate from the malign Influence of our Passions, by which we shall be render'd capable of framing such a right Judgement of Matters, as that our Actions may be regulate conform to that which is Just and Good.

This Science will inform both *Prince* and *Subject* of their mutual Duties. Here the Supreme Power may view his Genuine *Interest* and Peculiar *Province*: Here the Inferior may learn his due Allegiance. So that many Disorders in State may be happily prevented, while the *Natural Law* is made the Golden Rule of Mens Relative Duties; Which Law inculcates *Justice,*

Wise, Probity and Virtue, as necessary for the Support of Societies.

This notable Learning will qualifie Gentlemen for their Princes and Countries Service in Church or State, at Home or Abroad. It will lead Them in to the Secret Springs of State Affairs. The Laws of Peace and War shall here be handled. The Actions and Enterprizes of Princes and Generals shall be compared and duely weigh'd, whereby others may be instructed by the Example, and at the Expence of their Antecessors. By this Science Subjects may be taught how They shall demean themselves in Peace and War. Particular Rules of OEconomicks shall be enjoyn'd and enforc'd, wherein the Prudent Management of Publick and Private Affairs may be attain'd.

Lastly, It is nottour what little notice is taken in teaching Youth to Speak and Write in a proper Style. There are only a few who can expresse their Thoughts in a neat and quaint Dialect. Therefore I shall cause Gentlemen compose Discourses in Declamations and Themes. I shall make Them Argue with one another, so that they shall easily learn Reasoning without difficult Terms. In short, I shall take

as proper a Method for their Advancement in their Mother-Tongue, that is usual in Forreign Universities and Schools. This will occasion them to appear at the Barr more briskly, and will acquaint them with an Easie and Polite Expression upon any Occasion.

My Method shall be so Pertinent, that Gentlemen shall not think They undergo a Drudgery or Pennance; But They shall be charm'd into a chearful Prosecution of this Knowledge, in regard They shall quickly perceive and reap the Benefite of their Labour.

How necessar this Design will prove, I leave it to your Lordships Sagacious Consideration. This Undertaking in my humble Opinion, ought to be encouraged, because it will embellish our Youth with many rare Accomplishments, that will be useful to Them, when they come to Act their Parts upon the Theatre of the World.

May it then please your Lordship, to forward this Noble Project, by recommending it to the Queens most Excellent Majesty, (who is a singular Favourer of Virtue) or to the Right Honourable Parliament, that I may be assisted in carrying on

a Design which will undoubtedly accrue to the Nations Interest, under the Auspicious Conduct of your Lordship. I beg not only your Lordships Patronage in this Affair, but also Pardon for thus interrupting You from more Momentuous and Arduous Matters.

That your Lordship may long Live and Prosper, to the Lasting Honour and Splendour of your Queen and Country, is the sargest Petition of

My LORD,

Your Lordships most Humble
and most Faithful
Servant,

Edinburgh the 23^d.
of March 1705.

WILL: COCKBURN.



Advertisement:

ALL young Noblemen
and Gentlemen,
who desire to be instructed
in this Polite Study,
may please repair
to my Lodgings, opposite
to the foot of Nidderie's
Wynd, upon the
20th. of June next,
where they shall be due-
ly attended.

Advertisement

ALL young Noblemen
and Gentlemen
who desire to be instructed
in this polite study
may have the repair
to my Lodge opposite
to the foot of Middle-
rier Wynd upon the
south of Jane street
where they shall be dis-
posed to attend.



